

Hello. My name is Chris Dixon. I am the guitar player/principlesong-writer for the Washington, DC -based band Full Minute of Mercury (<http://www.fullminute.com>). I am also a concert promoter.

My band is currently unsigned. We play locally at least twice per month, although sometimes more. "Local" isn't exactly a very defined term in the VA/DC/MD area, because local to us, can go as far north as Baltimore and as far south as Richmond. These are, however, in reality - very separate markets.

I would say our local following is stronger than most bands in the area, although we consider ourselves at this point to be a second-tier band (meaning, well established, but not by any means a local powerhouse). On Tap magazine described us as "the buzz of the local [DC] scene for over a year now."

Both DC101 and Z104 have local music shows, but they both occur on Sunday nights during very low traffic timeslots. We have been played on both shows.

Z104's show is relatively new, so I can't really judge the show at all besides the timeslot. During the show we were played on, two female fronted bands were played. DC101 appears to be heavily biased against female fronted acts. For their DC101 last band standing contest, 12 all male bands were chosen to compete for a very coveted slot under the guise of "the best representation of local music," despite the fact that several female fronted rock bands in the area (including mine) are generating a bigger buzz, have bigger draws, and are generally making more waves.

I don't really feel like the radio stations in our area are serving the local music community. A one hour show once per week during a throw away timeslot doesn't do anything for us. If they would just play one song by a local band per hour, mixed in with the third-party promoted national signed acts, local music would explode.

The FCC should place regulations on stations to play more local music, period. Right now, major corporate radio stations' playlists are being determined by major labels via third party promoters. Local bands that could very well conceivably explode have absolutely no chance in doing so due to number crunching program directors allotting the same 15 song playlists every day.

I think it is important to specify "unsigned" when talking about local music. In VA, for instance, forcing stations to play more local music will simply mean more Dave Matthews songs on the radio. There needs to be some specification for up and coming, unsigned bands.

If the station is a sports station, then they should air local sporting events. If it is a local music station, they should play local music - not just one hour per week either.

No. Stations do this anyways.

At least with the old payola system, I could conceivably "bribe" a DJ to play my songs. All it would take is a 100 dollar bill or some other perk. Now, via indie-promoters, the stake\$\$\$\$ have been upped. Smaller, unsigned bands cannot compete with this type of payola. Yes, it still exists. It is just far more sinister.

I do not think free concerts should be considered payola.

Sure, record labels should be allowed to buy ads promoting their music, just as a local band should be allowed to. Eliminate the indie-promoters, let DJs play what they want to play, and perhaps the music industry will boom again like it did in the 80s.

If you're going to open up the airwaves so that DJs can actually grant requests for local artists, then they would have to be in the studio at the time to grant such requests. So yes, this practice should be eliminated.

National playlists are at the heart of the problem. This is why local artists suffer and get nowhere in the industry. I believe national playlists should be eliminated entirely and what gets played on the radio should be determined by DJs.

The FCC should require that all programming decisions are made at the local level and it should definitely require a certain (I would say 15-20%) percentage of local content.

I think it is great that the FCC is finally going to look into this problem which has hurt musicians for almost two decades now.